



Grandma

by Annelies Judson

When I ask where my grandma got her tattoos,
she says, “It was when I was a pirate.”
I tell her not to be so silly.
“I’m not being silly,” she says,
a glint in her eyes.

She tells me about the frothy sea
and the whipping wind,
singing shanties as she scrubbed the decks.
And the time her ship sprung a leak
just as they’d spotted treasure.

Her captain’s name was Goodbeard.
Instead of a parrot, he had a feather duster
that he kept on his shoulder.
If you weren’t scrubbing fast enough,
he’d tickle your toes.

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Sometimes they would fight other pirates
with swords made of cream cheese.
When they got tired of fighting,
they would tell jokes and drink pink lemonade
and sleep on the deck under the stars.

I roll my eyes and smile.
“What’s the real story?” I ask.
Grandma lifts a finger, the one
with a tattoo of a tiny star below the knuckle.
She taps the side of her nose.

Then she flashes a wicked grin.
And together we plunder her biscuit tin.

